

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03829 061026Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----008650 061029Z /12

O R 060930Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4818
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3829

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PGOV, PINS, LE
SUBJECT: MOVEMENT OF LEBANESE FORCE TO SOUTH LEBANON

REF: DAO IR 857 0074 77

1. ACCORDING TO LATEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US, GOL
IS NOW PREPARING TO SEND ELEMENTS OF THREE UNITS TO
SOUTHERN LEBANON. THESE UNITS ARE:

A) THE FIRST INFANTRY BRIGADE, NOW STATIONED
IN ABLAH, IN THE BEKAA, COMMANDED BY MAJOR IBRAHIM SHAHINE
(SHIA). THIS UNIT IS APPROX 1500 MEN, 65 PERCENT MUSLIM
(MOST SHIA) AND 35 PERCENT CHRISTIANS. THIS FIRST BRIGADE
WAS BROUGHT UNDER FULL COMMAND OF CENTRAL LEBANESE ARMY
COMMAND AT YARZE ON MAY 7, 1977 BY GENERAL KHOURY AND IS
NOW CONSIDERED FULLY RESPONSIVE TO HIS AND PRESIDENT
SARKIS' ORDERS, THIS BRIGADE IS PART OF BEKAA MILITARY
REGION COMMANDED BY GEN. KHOURY'S BROTHER COL. MICHEL AND
INCLUDES AIR FORCE UNITS AT RAYAK (WHICH ARE MOSTLY
CHRISTIAN, BUT WE KNOW OF NO PLANS TO USE AIR FORCE UNITS
IN THE SOUTH.

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B) A CHRISTIAN UNIT FROM THE ARMY BARRACKS AT
SARBA, NEAR JUNIEH. THIS BARRACKS IS COMMANDED BY
COL. ANTOINE LAHAD, A STAUNCH MARONITE, AS ARE MOST OF
HIS TROOPS. MANY OF THESE TROOPS FOUGHT UNDER GENERAL
(THEN COL) KHOURY IN THE BATTLE OF CHEKKA AND KHOURY
CONSIDERS THAT HE CAN GET A BATTALION THAT WILL BE
RESPONSIVE AND LOYAL TO HIM AND PRESIDENT SARKIS FROM

THIS BRIGADE.

C) A MIXED UNIT FROM THE SIDON AREA. THIS UNIT, WHICH IS JUST BEING FORMED, IS COMMANDED BY MAJOR OASIM SIBLINI (SHIA) AND IS ABOUT 65 PERCENT CHRISTIAN. GEN. KHOURY THINKS THAT ONCE IT IS EQUIPPED AND TRAINED; THIS UNIT COULD BE PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE BECAUSE ALL THE TROOPS COME FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON. HOWEVER, IT WILL PROBABLY TAKE SOME TIME TO GET THIS UNIT ORGANIZED.

2. AS REFTTEL MAKES CLEAR, GENERAL KHOURY BELIEVES HE NEEDS TWO MONTHS TO PREPARE THESE UNITS PROPERLY FOR THEIR MISSION IN THE SOUTH BUT HE MAY BE ORDERED TO MOVE SOME TROOPS THERE SOONER TO POLICE THE CEASE FIRE IN THAT AREA. THAT IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS AS PHASE THREE OF THE CHAUTARA AGREEMENT.

3. NOTE: SOCALLED "VANGUARDS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY" WERE ABOLISHED ON MAY 7, WHEN THEY "WERE INTEGRATED INTO REGULAR UNITS OF LEBANESE ARMY AND ALL SYRIAN SUPPORT TO THEM CEASED AT THAT TIME. ALL OF THE UNITS AND MEN DESCRIBED ABOVE ARE LEBANESE RPT LEBANESE. THERE ARE NO SYRIAN TROOPS AMONG THEM. WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE REPORT SYRIAN TROOPS WERE TO BE INCLUDED IN THESE UNITS ORIGINATED, BUT IS WITHOUT SUBSTANCE.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, TROOP CONCENTRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT03829
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770282-0856
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770890/aaaacxyl.tel
Line Count: 86
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0650e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1690637
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOVEMENT OF LEBANESE FORCE TO SOUTH LEBANON
TAGS: MILI, PGOV, PINS, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0650e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009